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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the impact of a disability on an individual's lifestyle and addresses ways in which several countries are attempting to integrate disabled people in work leisure pursuits. The economic, personal, and social effects of disability are noted from research. Among the social/environmental barriers to full integration in work and leisure considered are legal, physical, and attitudinal obstacles. The freedom to work and participate in leisure is seen as more accepted in other western industrial societies than in the United States. Policy declarations of such groups as the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, and Rehabilitation International on the full participation of disabled people in work and leisure are cited. Examples of work practices in Sweden, Poland, and England and of leisure practices in Sweden and Canada are described as examples of efforts in integration. (CL)

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Cross-national Issues Related to Labor and Leisure Participation

Marianne Maynard

It is estimated that there are over 500 million people with disabilities in the world today, with the expectation that this number will increase by 200 million by the year 2000 (22). This number of disabled persons is already having a major impact on the world's human and economic resources. The vast majority of disabled persons are in the unemployed, low-income categories and unable to contribute to the economic growth of their nations. Chronic illness, poor nutrition, poor sanitation, accidents, and diseases are not only problems faced by Third World nations, but also by North American and European nations. Added to this is the current concern for the growing numbers of unemployed and displaced workers in the new technological age and the struggle for and realignment of scarce world resources. Emerging from these global concerns is a reconsideration of the values of work and leisure with emphasis being placed on the need for a more humane and equitable balance between work and leisure in a person's lifestyle.

This paper explores the impact of disabilities on a person's lifestyle and discusses the issues and practices that go along with integration into work and leisure.

The Effects of Disability on Lifestyles

Who are the disabled and what are the issues that impact on their lifestyles? Porter (15) provides a profile of some of the characteristics of people with disabilities in the U.S. who need rehabilitation services. Highlights of some of these characteristics are that:

- Over 11 million noninstitutionalized Americans aged 16 to 64 reported that they had permanent work disabilities in 1970. This is 10 percent of all men and 8.5 percent of all women; many have long-term disabilities lasting five or more years.

- The disabled population is considerably older than the general population, with 42 percent of the handicapped between 35 and 54 years of age and 35 percent between 55 and 64 years of age.

- Disabled people have less schooling than nondisabled people. Thirty-seven percent in the age range of 18 to 64 did not go beyond elementary school compared with 18 percent of the general population, and eighty-five percent did not go beyond high school compared with 75 percent of the general population.

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- Disabilities related to work capabilities are more prevalent among minorities than the white population. In 1970, for individuals between 18 and 64 years of age, permanent disabilities were reported by 9 percent of the white population, 13 percent of the black population, and 10 percent of those of Hispanic origins.

- Disabled people are more likely to be heads of households; 13 percent of households were headed by disabled women in the disabled population compared to 10 percent headed by women in the general population.

Such data suggest that people with permanent or long-term disabilities are older and less educated but maintain management responsibility for a household. The following characteristics cited by Porter on the employment status of disabled people provide us with additional facts about their economic well-being, such as:

- A higher proportion of disabled people have never worked: of those aged 18 to 64, 4 percent of the disabled men had never worked compared with 2 percent of the total male population, and 16 percent of the disabled women compared to 11 percent of all women. Fewer disabled people are in the work force. Forty-two percent of the disabled adults were employed in 1970 compared to 59 percent in the general population.

- Disabled people have lower earnings than nondisabled people aged 14 to 64. The average disabled person's income was $1,000 below the average for the total population. Those working held proportionately fewer professional, technical, and managerial jobs than did the general population. Disabled men were more likely than nondisabled men to have clerical, sales, service, or laborers' jobs, while disabled women were more likely to be laborers or service workers.

The severity of impairments determines certain functional limitations, lack of access to educational and training opportunities, over-protectiveness of family members, and job discrimination. These are all factors that account for the higher proportion of disabled people who have never worked. Those employed, on the whole, were also in lower-paying positions or worked only part time, and they earned less than average income. In general, such data would suggest that a larger proportion of people with disabilities are experiencing a marginal lifestyle. The magnitude of the problem becomes clear with a more complete analysis of data on disability. Such data can serve as a guideline to the needs of the disabled. Some U.S. data on disability in the work force (12) corroborates Porter's findings. The data show that about 10 percent of the population

18 to 64 years of age has some degree of work disability, and about 11 percent have some degree of functional limitation that interferes with total independence in living. (p. 110-111)

Hammerman and Maikowski (7) reported a strong relationship between disability and poverty, which derives from a combination of reduced family income and the extra costs of disability. Expenditures for health care for those with disability are three times more than for the nondisabled population. These extra disability-related costs include expenditures for domestic help, transportation, home aids, and assistive devices. Other costs may include the loss of income from work. There is, also, the loss of time for developing and expanding skills and the loss of schooling, social contacts, leisure activities, and self-esteem, and the resulting personal and marital stresss. Disability pensions rarely make up for both the loss of income and the higher costs of living. These factors have a decided effect on the quality of life of many disabled people and their families.

In the U.S., disabled individuals are faced with a confusing array of incentives and disincentives for both working and not working. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provides a cash allowance to disabled recipients and is complemented by Medicaid coverage of health-related needs. When disabled individuals return to work, thereby relinquishing their eligibility for SSI and Medicaid, they may find themselves in a serious financial situation. Their paychecks and benefits may not equal the amount of money and protection they received from SSI and Medicaid. The length of time it takes to reestablish eligibility for benefits has resulted in many disabled people making the choice of not working. The Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program, in an effort to end the decision not to work made by disabled recipients, has strongly encouraged recipients to seek rehabilitation services. The plan is that the recipient will improve to the point of being eliminated from needing SSDI. If the disabled person does not take advantage of rehabilitation services, he or she is threatened with benefit termination (21). Nearly one-half of the severely disabled men and three-quarters of the severely disabled women in the U.S. received no benefits from the disability benefit system. Most seem to be aware of the benefits but have not applied because of the stigma attached to recipients.

Comparing the United States with other countries, Hammerman and Maikowski (7) found that some countries have provisions for the regular adjustment (indexing) of disability benefits. Countries that index on the basis of changes in a wage index and maintain and increase the real value of pensions are Austria, France, Finland, Federal Republic of Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Argentina, and Brazil. Denmark, Sweden, Canada, Chile, New Zealand, and Columbia, like the United States, index on the

basis of the consumer price index and merely maintain the original purchasing power of benefits. Many countries also have social security programs that provide income support and other benefits to their disabled populations. France and Belgium counter possible work disincentives with regulations that provide for a two-thirds reduction in earning capacity for initial entitlement. They do not suspend pensions or terminate persons from roles unless their physical improvement results in an earning capacity exceeding 50 percent of their pension.

Figures reported in the August 25, 1983 Handicapped Americans Reports, based on U.S. Census Bureau reports, paint a dismal picture of the relationship between disability and unemployment. For example, the census bureau survey found that (16):

> The poverty rate among disabled workers reached 26 percent in 1982. That means that of the 13.1 million people classified in a March 1982 census survey as having a work disability, 3.4 million were living in poverty. In contrast, the poverty rate in that year for people with no handicaps to employment was about 10 percent.
>
> Disabled men took part in the work force at about half the rate of nondisabled men--41.5 percent for work-disabled men compared with 88.8 percent for those with no handicaps to employment.
>
> For disabled working-age women, the gap was even greater. The report found they were only one-third as likely to be in the labor force in 1982 as women with no work disability--23.7 percent compared with 64.3 percent.
>
> Disabled working men earned $3,600 less in 1981 than their nondisabled peers. Disabled working women earned less than half of what disabled men earned in that year, and were paid $2,600 less than nondisabled working women.
>
> Persons with a work disability (or health problem that prevents working-age people (16-64) from holding a job or limits the work they can do) were seriously economically disadvantaged.
>
> Among disabled working-age men, the unemployment rate in 1982 was 17 percent, as

compared with 10.2 percent for men with no work disability. Among female workers the unemployment rate was 18.8 percent for the disabled and 8.3 percent for the nondisabled.

In addition to earning less and experiencing more unemployment than healthy workers, disabled working men tended to have fewer employer-provided benefits. About 59 percent were covered by a health plan in 1981, compared with 72 percent of employees with no work disability.

Work-disabled persons make up a "disproportionate share" of persons participating in some of the major assistance programs. For example, about 23 percent of the 12.1 million working-age people who received food stamps in 1981 were work disabled. The work disability rate among Medicaid recipients was about 37 percent.

Overall, about 9 percent of the nation's working-age population had a work disability in 1982. The percentages are higher in the central cities of the Northeast (11.3 percent) and the nonmetropolitan areas of the South (11.7 percent).

The chances of having a work disability increase rapidly after workers hit middle-age. The rate last year was 7 percent for persons 35 to 44 years old, 12.3 percent for persons 45 to 54 years of age, and 24 percent for persons age 55 to 64.

Among the working-age population, the disability rate was 31 percent for people with less than an eighth-grade education, 9 percent for high school graduates, and 4.6 percent among college graduates.

Based on these facts, many disabled people never have the opportunity to engage in the normal social roles and the developmental tasks of their age peers.

Social/Environmental Barriers to Full Integration In Work and Leisure

Barriers to Work

Work takes on great importance for individuals who find it difficult to enter or maintain a position at the workplace. Acton (1) feels that the value of employment for disabled persons is derived from four interacting economic and psychosocial pressures: They are:

(1) The need for income that can be obtained from gainful employment.

(2) The value placed by most societies on productive and gainful employment.

(3) The need to be integrated in the normal flow of life.

(4) The regular structure and discipline given to life through work.

The characteristics of severely disabled individuals, along with attitudinal, social, and physical barriers, prevent many from fully assuming their place in society. Society and most of its functions have been developed to meet the requirements of normal, average, or standard situations, a tendency that seems to become more pronounced in the developed societies. As long as "normality" in society is defined in narrow terms, the disabled will continue to face important social barriers to their integration into all aspects of life. There still exists a tendency in modern society to categorize and classify people. This ultimately leads to prejudices and discrimination against certain categories of people, such as the disabled, minorities, and women. All of these groups face similar social barriers to integration in the work force (4).

Legal, physical, and attitudinal barriers have traditionally stood in the way of the disabled person's right to full employment. Attitudes held by employers create stereotypes of the kinds of jobs each disability group can be expected to perform. A report in the U.S. News & World Report (9) confirms these findings and concludes that job discrimination remains widespread against persons with histories of epilepsy, alcoholism, cancer, and other hidden health problems, as well as against those who have served time in prison. Also, cases of "psychological discrimination" in the workplace were found to be common for those with hidden handicaps. The report finds that job bias continues despite a 1973 federal law that forbids employers who receive federal funds or contracts from denying jobs to those with handicaps.

A survey of 1,879 working people's attitudes (blue and white-collar workers and supervisors) toward physically disabled persons, especially in work contexts and with regard to the task of vocational and social rehabilitation, found that general knowledge and information about disabilities (recurrence and causes) and about the possibilities of rehabilitating the physically disabled was very limited. Some examples of these attitudes were that the majority of the respondents saw the physically disabled as different from "normal" people. Their general stereotype of a physically disabled person characterized the person as permanently suffering, helpless, emotionally disturbed, and socially isolated. Many held the opinion that the disabled are partially responsible for their own disability. Attitudes concerning social acceptance and vocational and social integration indicated that over half of the respondents were in favor of partial or complete segregation and isolation of the disabled. The majority believed that employers and supervisors preferred non disabled workers even if the disabled person were as qualified as the nondisabled (20).

The survey also found that the majority of the respondents assessed productivity, qualifications, and vocational capacities of disabled workers as considerably below average. The results of Seifert's study suggests that negative and discriminating attitudes toward disabled persons are widely spread among U.S. working people (20).

A 1980 research study by the American Management Association indicated that another barrier to full employment for disabled people is inadequate job preparation and lack of marketable skills, particularly in technical areas. Along with these factors, employers identified such problems as: difficulty in locating qualified disabled employees; poor performance of professional and advocacy organizations in providing information on disabled persons' qualifications; disincentives offered by society that discourage disabled people from entering the job market; and insufficient information and corporate training programs dealing with disability (18).

With a surplus work force in the United States, as in many countries, handicapped workers are at a great disadvantage in competition with the able-bodied worker. Education and legislation, including compulsory measures like quota employment, may not be able to overcome employment practices. Although many employers may be sympathetic to handicapped people, they may, nevertheless, prefer to contribute towards disability pensions and organizations for the disabled than find a place for them in their employ. This attitude often stems from the belief that it is more efficient to discharge disabled workers and contribute to their support than try to retain them in employment. The World Health Organization suggests a need to persuade and educate employers to think

in terms of the residual capacity, rather than incapacity, of disabled persons, with the end result that disabled persons be absorbed into jobs they can perform on a more or less equal basis with able-bodied employees.

Barriers to Leisure

There are many barriers to the full participation of people with disabilities in leisure-time activities. These barriers include attitudinal, environmental, and socioeconomic barriers. Barriers to participation in leisure exist alongside barriers to employment in some degree in most countries. For example, attitudinal barriers to leisure-time participation are often reflected in the disabled consumer's feelings of discomfort, fear, and lack of skill in participating in community recreation programs. Personnel and the general public may have an aversion to the disabled person sharing the same leisure facilities with them and manifest their feelings with disgust, rejection, or by being overly helpful and pitying.

Environmental barriers prevent many disabled persons from participating in community activities because of the lack of accessibility of public buildings, parks, theaters, and even churches. Lack of accessible modes of public transportation prevents many mobility-limited people from getting to public places for enjoyment. Socioeconomic factors also prohibit many from engaging in leisure-time activities, especially those who are unemployed or on a very restricted budget. The costs of leisure-time activities may not seem much to the average person, but for low-income persons, the priority for other essential commodities will usually take precedence over purchasing a ticket to the theatre or baseball game or buying equipment for camping out or even paying the $2.00 admission fee for a visit to the museum.

Freedom to Work and Enjoy Leisure

The disabled person is entitled to the same opportunities as the general population: to work, change jobs, and to take leave from work and enjoy leisure. The freedom to work and partake of leisure are concepts that are not as widely accepted in the United States as they are in other modern Western industrial societies. Many Western countries have taken steps to insure the freedom to work. For example, the Netherlands and Great Britain have laws requiring industry to employ a certain percentage of disabled workers (14). Western European countries also provide more sheltered employment opportunities than in the United States.

The Dutch and English programs reflect their commitment to the individual's freedom to work. Successful functioning within a sheltered work setting is highly regarded in these societies, which is contrary to the U.S. push to have disabled persons placed in competitive employment. The "philosophy of those countries is that all citizens have the right to work, and when one is unable to obtain competitive employment, then it is the obligation of the government to provide a sheltered work setting where a livable income can be earned in a comparable industry that gives individuals the freedom to work" (14, p.7). By paying or subsidizing client's wages for indefinite periods of time, the governments of Holland and England assure that the disabled person has a place to work and income for living. The tolerance for an unemployed surplus population is not found in all modernized Western countries, and therefore does not appear to be a necessity, but rather it is a result of a social value system and selection bias pointed at those with disabling characteristics (14).

The freedom to enjoy leisure is also promoted in Holland. Under Holland's "National Working Incapacity Act" and other acts (such as the provisions of the health insurance scheme and those of the Ministry of Housing) provisions may provide that cover extra traveling expenses by rail, bus, and taxi for work, study, and leisure purposes.

In Canada, the National Inter-Agency Recreation Project (NIARP) has undertaken projects that benefit the leisure pursuits of all disability groups. The project has set up provincial recreation councils to work at the local level. The broad objective of each council is is increase leisure opportunities for disabled persons and support the process of normalization. The councils promote a continuum of support services including people supports (leisure counseling and education, volunteers, encouragement from family service providers and the community); physical supports (accessible facilities and transportation, funding); and program supports (a range of programs to match both interests and abilities). The recreation councils do not themselves provide direct recreation services but act in advisory, educational, and promotional capacities. (12)

Policy Declarations

The UNESCO Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that everyone has the right to work. The right to work is one of the most basic of all our cherished rights. Work gives an individual not only economic self-sufficiency, but also a sense of dignity, self-worth, and the satisfaction of making a contribution to our society (3).

The Charter for the 80s (Rehabilitation International, 1981), a statement of consensus on international priorities for the decade 1980-

1990, has set forth the general principles concerning the integration and full participation of disabled people in all aspects of the life of their community. Excerpts from these principles related to participation in the work force are:

- When possible, disabled people should be placed in open employment.
- Special measures should be taken, as appropriate, to create and widen employment opportunities for disabled people in both urban and rural areas.
- A disabled person should not, as a result of his disability, be discriminated against in respect to wages and other conditions of employment if his/her work is equal to that of other workers.
- Disabled people should have the option to change, interrupt or terminate employment in the same manner and on the same basis as other workers. (17)

The charter also addresses the need for leisure participation. Statements that reflect leisure accessibility and opportunities are:

- Societies have an obligation to make their physical environments, housing and transportation, social and health services, educational and work opportunities, cultural and social life, including sports and recreational facilities completely accessible to people with disabilities...
- The community must be accessible to all its members. People with disabilities have a right to use all structures intended for general public use. Like everyone else they need a useable means of transportation within the community. Building standards and community designs should include requirements for accessible living, learning, working, recreational and transportation conditions, in rural as well as urban areas...
- People with disabilities have the same needs for social relationships and recreational opportunities as do all other people. Most people with disabilities are capable of utilizing community recreational facilities, whether they involve sports, creative activities or other dimensions. Such facilities should be developed on the basis of inclusion, rather than exclusion, of the members of the community with disabilities. (14)

These principles are being put into practice in various countries with the goal of integrating disabled people in work and leisure pursuits.

Work/Leisure Practices

Examples of Work Practices in Sweden, Poland, and England

In Sweden, work is the basis of economic and social welfare. To the individual, work is the foundation of material support and a source of satisfaction, activity, and companionship. The objective of the Swedish labor market policy is to provide work for everyone. However, unemployment among disabled people is, on the average, considerably higher than among other groups, and, in recent years, disabled persons have found it increasingly difficult to obtain work. This seems to be due to an increased demand for efficiency at the workplace and low demand for labor in both the private and public sector. The Employment Protection Act gives disabled persons and elderly workers valuable protection in their employment and helps to counteract rejection at the workplace (10). Governmental funding is available in Sweden to subsidize the wage of the disabled employee on a new job and, at the same time, to give an economic benefit to the employer for hiring the disabled worker. There are also abundant sheltered workshops in both Sweden and Denmark, frequently at transitional units but also in terminal placements for the severely disabled (8).

In Poland, disabled and nondisabled persons work together. There are also industries primarily for disabled persons. The government has a law that states that regular industries must have at least four percent disabled workers. The law further assists disabled persons into the work force with modification of cars or homes as well as the work sites (6).

Poland also has an Invalid's Cooperative Union that groups 436 enterprises and employs 288,000 people, 177,000 of whom are disabled. Each enterprise is operated as a cooperative with its own management and works in accordance with the rules and guidelines of the national union. Rehabilitation services and training are supplied as needed by the disabled members, and the conditions of work are controlled to accommodate the limitations of each person. There are also 400,000 of the seriously disabled employed in 309 sheltered workshops, and 3,000 work in their homes. All workers are remunerated on the same basis as able-bodied Polish workers and share in the surplus produce of their cooperatives (1).

Remploy Limited in the United Kingdom is another example. The government provides facilities for the training and employment of severely disabled people in 87 factories producing and marketing a wide

variety of items and services. In 1979 there were 8,241 disabled employees and an additional 2,400 persons not classified as disabled employed in these factories.

Leisure Practices in Sweden and Canada

The Swedish Central Bureau of Statistics carried out an investigation of living conditions, including the leisure practices of disabled persons. In regards to leisure, the report disclosed that large numbers of the motor-handicapped persons interviewed (a total of 380,000) had not taken part, to any great extent, in the leisure activities studied in the investigation. Three-quarters had no access to a holiday home and two-thirds had not been on a holiday during the last year. In general, disabled persons showed low activity in the leisure sector (10).

Although municipal leisure facilities are required by law in Sweden to be made accessible to persons with motor or orientation handicaps, adaptation of existing buildings and premises to enhance leisure participation is still very slow in development. The report also suggests that disabled persons in Sweden do not take maximum advantage of existing leisure opportunities and that this is partly due to the fact that many have informational handicaps. The solution suggested is active outreach information activities.

Sweden is placing emphasis on cooperation between local and government authorities and the voluntary organizations to plan for integration of disabled persons in ordinary activities. A few examples of planning by local authorities in this area are the improvement of ground surfacing for wheelchair users; adaptation of holiday homes to meet the needs of the disabled; rebuilding leisure centers and sport halls; support of sports of the disabled; making accessible beaches, camping sites, and sports grounds for wheelchair users and designing special maps for the visually handicapped (10).

A study conducted in 1977 by the Center for Communications of the University of Ottawa revealed that the daily cultural/recreational activities of disabled persons are primarily television viewing and radio listening, then reading. The findings suggested that these activities indirectly reflected the actual isolation of many disabled persons and their difficulty in gaining access to group activities. The study also found that attendance at concerts or the theater occurred only once a year for most disabled persons, and it was even more rare for a disabled person to go to a movie, take part in educational or artistic activities, and in artistic activities or even play a musical instrument (12).

The Canadian federal government, provinces, and local authorities have taken the initiative to promote physical accessibility to cultural events. Throughout Canada there is an effort to inform people about the present accessibility of public buildings for the physically handicapped. A most important governmental decision was the adoption of Supplement No. 5 to the National Building Code, which requires that all new buildings built by the federal government or by a federal agency must be designed according to certain rules and specifications so as to be easily accessible to physically disabled persons. Application of the Code to construction in the private sector remains, however, haphazard. Other areas of improvement are braille books and cassettes for the blind in the libraries, and braille floor plans or taped comments that serve to guide blind persons in museums, art galleries, and other public settings (12).

Conclusion

Because of global changes in the nature of work, societies seem ready and even welcome changes in employment practices.The adoption of new employment practices will have a major effect on all workers, including those with disabilities. It is hoped that these new models will continue to integrate the disabled with the nondisabled at the workplace and provide more flexibility in work hours, work location, and work incentives.

We are bound to observe major changes in our lifestyles in the 21st century. The importance of leisure for a healthy lifestyle--as a healthy use of free time, and as a balance to work--has expanded our horizons. Employment patterns are chanaging throughout the world. This trend will continue for years to come as new technology takes jobs away from workers. The electronic office, with its range of sophisticated time and labor-saving devices, will have fewer employees performing large volumes of work at equipment designed for efficient processing, storage and retrieval of information. Many employees will work at home and readily access data banks and communication systems. The home office or new cottage industry will have considerable benefit for the disabled, senior citizens, and those who do not like the daily commut to work. The cost and benefit to the worker will vary. The convenience and reduced cost of working at home may create social isolation, but be offset to the convenience of home employment.

New trends in work roles will require retraining and reeducation of workers, those willing to learn new skills, change old habits or adapt to these changes will remain unemployed. New work - non-work roles will require society to develop a fresh conceptualization of the relationships between work and leisure.

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New trends in work roles will require retraining and reeducation of workers, those willing to learn new skills, change old habits or adapt to these changes will remain unemployed. New work - non-work roles will require society to develop a fresh conceptualization of the relationships between work and leisure.

The foundation must be laid now for the full participation of all segments of our society. By learning from each other, sharing information, and joining forces with people with disabilities and with the rehabilitation, education, business, and leisure communities, innovative approaches and solutions can be discovered for a richer, healthier life.

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